

EARLY DIAGNOSIS—Edited by Henry Miller, M.D., F.R.C.P., Physician in Neurology, Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle upon Tyne. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore 2, Maryland, 1959. 400 pages, \$6.50.

In Great Britain, which has developed a socio-economic system of medical care somewhat different from that in the United States, the general practitioner has far more patients to care for, far less time per patient, and far fewer hospital responsibilities than in this country. There is a much greater gap between the practitioner and the hospital specialist. And the natural history of disease is more difficult for the general practitioner to follow.

This book is written to give the general practitioner a greater acquaintance with some of the aspects of medicine which often are covered only by implication in standard English texts. It is in the form of some twenty-five essays by a number of Great Britain's most distinguished specialists. The result is *a book of good admonitions* on early diagnosis.

The tone is set in the first essay, by Lord Cohen of Birkenhead ("The purpose of diagnosis is action . . ."), who enunciates nine guiding principles ending with: "Never allow the social position of a patient to limit your examination." This principle is punctuated by such salty remarks as: "Cancer of the rectum is no respecter of persons—if you don't put your finger in it, you put your foot in it . . . nor should rank blind one to the possibility of such diseases as syphilis, for every bishop has been an undergraduate, and every admiral a midshipman."

Some of the advice given is contrary to usual American experience. For example, regarding the practice of routine cytology smears for cervical cancer, Stabler remarks: ". . . practical considerations make the investigation of doubtful value under ordinary circumstances . . . it seems unlikely that smear examinations will lead to any significant alteration in mortality rates." And the serum iodine level for thyroid disease, employed freely in the United States, is passed over by Dunlap as "a delicate and difficult procedure which is seldom available for routine use."

For the most part, however, the essays are informative, the presentation and the writing are interesting. This volume can be recommended to the general medical reader.

EDGAR WAYBURN, M.D.

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CLINICAL ENDOCRINOLOGY I—Edited by Edwin B. Astwood, M.D., Grune & Stratton, New York, 381 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N.Y., 1960. 724 pages, \$18.75.

Clinical Endocrinology I began as a second edition of *Progress in Clinical Endocrinology*, published some 10 years earlier under the editorship of Samuel Soskin. As the present book took shape under the editorship of Edwin Astwood, it was realized that it was properly not a revision, but in effect a new volume. Most of the chapters are made up of new material written by new authors; a number are monographs of lasting value.

Clinical endocrinology is a broad field of medical science and practice. In this book, sharp lines have not been drawn between what may be considered clinical or nonclinical, although the emphasis is on the former. Also, complete coverage of clinical endocrinology has not been attempted. The aim has been to provide concise, authoritative articles written by authors with considerable personal experience in their respective fields. In a few instances, there are fairly extensive reviews with more complete documentation, but in most cases, only key references have been cited.

Classic and well established material has, in some cases, been supplanted by topics selected largely on the basis of their current interest and importance. As a consequence, some areas have been dealt with more thoroughly than

others, and some subjects have not received the attention they would deserve in a work of more extensive scope. Within this framework of limitations, however, a great deal of useful information and many interesting articles on a fairly wide range of topics have been included.

This is an excellent volume for the physician or the student with an interest in endocrinology to own, to browse through at his leisure, to spend more time with when he can. It is also a book for the shelves of medical schools and hospitals, to provide good present day reference in the rapidly growing and changing field of clinical endocrinology.

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CLASSICS OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY—(Formerly titled: *Epoch-making Contributions to Medicine, Surgery and the Allied Sciences*)—Collected by C. N. B. Camac. Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick Street, New York 14, New York, 1960. 435 pages, \$2.25.

SOURCE BOOK OF MEDICAL HISTORY—Compiled With Notes by Logan Clendening, M.D. Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick Street, New York 14, N. Y., 1960. 685 pages, \$2.75.

This pair of source books of medical history make a useful working combination for those interested in the development of knowledge. Clendening's book is the more comprehensive if the more sketchy of the two: beginning with excerpts from the Egyptian papyri of the second millennium B.C., there are some 700 pages of excerpts from the writings of nearly every great doctor until the end of the nineteenth century. Although the selections are brief, there are descriptive notes and bibliographical references. Camac on the other hand has concentrated his interest on only seven epoch-making discoveries, but he has quoted at length and in some cases completely the original text. Antisepsis, circulation of the blood, percussion of the chest, auscultation of the chest, vaccination against smallpox, anesthesia and puerperal fever are the important subjects which are considered.

Both volumes are well edited with sufficient explanatory material to set the stage even for readers unfamiliar with the subject. These inexpensive but excellent reprints will do a service to the understanding of medical history.

ARTHUR L. BLOOMFIELD, M.D.

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BASIC FACTS OF BODY WATER AND IONS—Stewart M. Brooks, M.S., Science Instructor, Lasell Junior College, Auburndale, Mass. Instructor in Pharmacology at Boston City Hospital School of Nursing, and Children's Hospital School of Nursing, Boston, Mass. Springer Publishing Company, Inc., 44 East 23rd Street, New York 10, N. Y., 1960. 159 pages, \$2.75.

This book is a stated attempt to bring basic understanding of fluid and electrolyte problems to students of nursing, pharmacy and medical technology. As such, it is an acceptable contribution largely because of the attractively low price. A 69-page Part I covers the basic chemical and physical principles in an informative style that should provide good reading for medical students as well as paramedical personnel. In the 65-page Part II the author deals with clinical applications of fluid and electrolyte problems. Unfortunately, his clinical naiveté makes this section of little value to the medical student. The attempt to cover a large field with brevity and the failure, in many instances, to develop the clinical discussions on sound chemical concepts make me doubt if Part II will prove particularly valuable to nursing, technical and pharmacy students.

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